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UNCLAS HARARE 001871

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S FOR RAYNOR; AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND  
SIMS  
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR NEARY  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION GOZ-CONTROLLED THE HERALD HAILS  
CLOSURE OF THE "DAILY NEWS"; HARARE

11. Under the headline "Action against Daily News proper" the government-controlled daily newspaper "The Herald" dedicated its September 16 editorial to saluting the government of Zimbabwe for shutting down the "Daily News" and its sister weekly "The Daily News on Sunday," saying "No individual or organization should ever be allowed to hold the sovereignty and laws of Zimbabwe to ransom." Excerpts:

12. "The closure of 'The Daily News' on Friday last week may not augur well for the advancement of democratic principles but such principles should never ever be abused to advance illegality and to blackmail the sovereignty of a country and its laws. . .The 'Daily News' did not only break the law but pocketed its lawlessness in the face of the government, daring it to take action. Fortunately, the government refused to take the bait and left the paper to continue publishing irrespective of the requirements of the country's media laws. . .However, buoyed by the lack of punitive action by the government, the opposition paper went on to challenge in court the constitutionality of the very same legislation that it was refusing to recognize. After closing the court case the newspaper publishers thought they could just simply stroll back to their offices and ask to be registered when the deadline for such registration had expired long back as if nothing had happened. There is such a thing as honor even among thieves. If the opposition paper felt really strongly that it cannot submit itself to the media laws of this country, it should have simply closed shop on its own and stood by its principles. . .No individual or organization should ever be allowed to hold the sovereignty and laws of Zimbabwe to ransom, as the country is bigger than individuals and organizations. No amount of intimidation, especially from those countries that have been funding lawlessness in Zimbabwe, should deter the arms of government from fulfilling their functions. . . ."

SULLIVAN